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BRUCHE HALL,

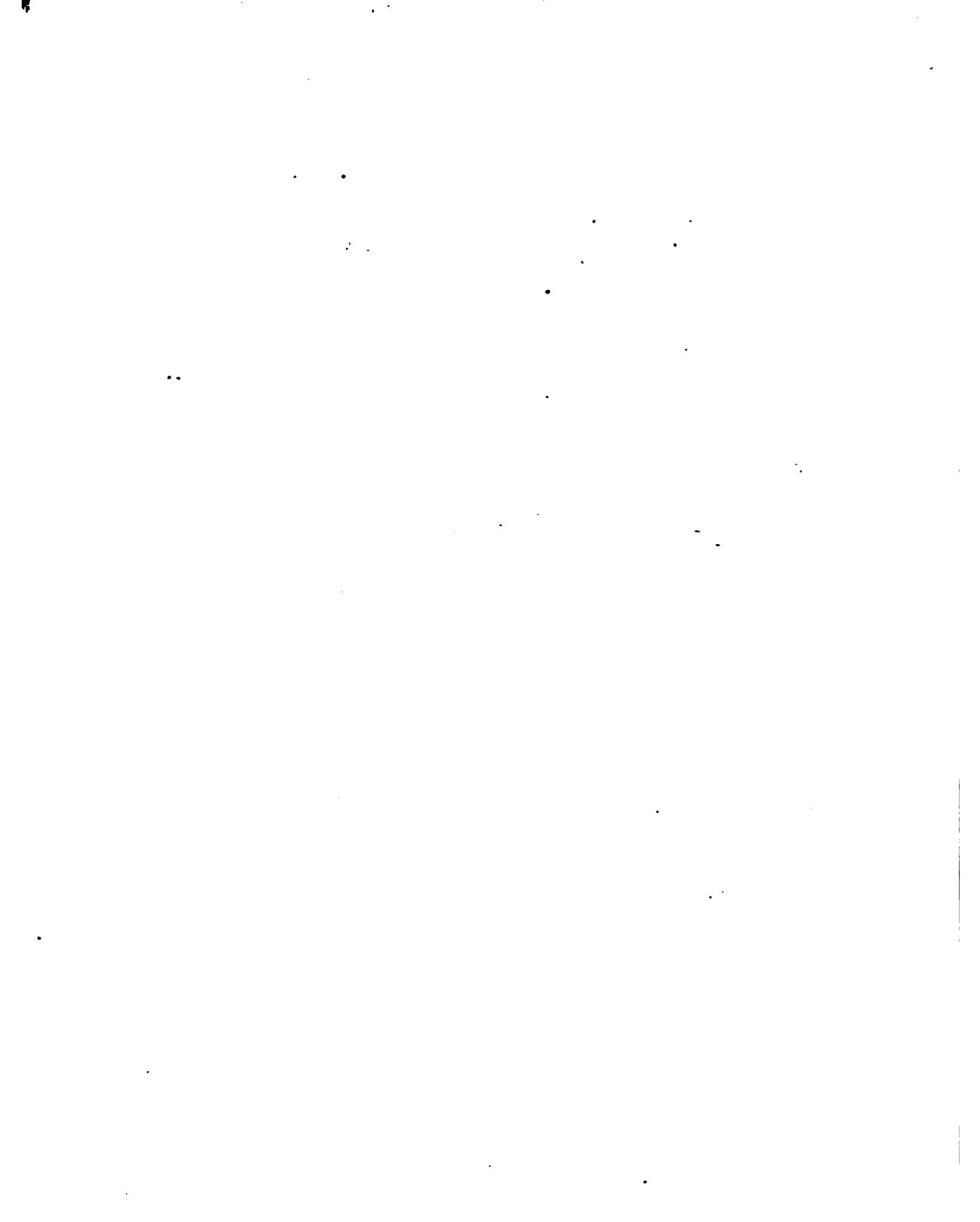
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BRUCHE. A MONOGRAPH.

THE HISTORY
OF
BRUCHE HALL,

NEAR WARRINGTON,

WITH

*NOTICES OF THE BRUCHE AND OTHER FAMILIES
ITS OWNERS.*

BY WILLIAM BEAMONT.

"O memory wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the stream of time I turn my sail."

WARRINGTON:
MACKIE, BREWTNALL & CO., GUARDIAN OFFICE.

1878.

Bn 5168.265



Coolidge fund

TO

Samuel Rigby, Esquire,

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE FOR THE
COUNTY OF LANCASTER,

WHO, SO GREATLY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD,
NOW OCCUPIES BRUCHE HALL,

THESE PAGES ARE, WITH MUCH RESPECT AND ESTEEM,

Dedicated

BY

THEIR AUTHOR.

ORFORD HALL,

5th November, 1878.

BRUCHE HALL.

CHAPTER I.

ON both sides of the Mersey near Warrington, there may be seen still standing some of those old moated houses which were built in the times—

When men built less against the elements
Than their next neighbours,

and for more security surrounded their houses with a well-filled moat, gave to them heavily barred doors, with openings in the walls in which broad stone mullions alternated with narrow slits, through which light only found its way as it were by stealth. These windows were thus constructed in order to keep out marauders, and not for the same reason which once forced a meditative student to exclaim that—

He loved the gloom
The sun excluding window gave the room.

In these houses, which have now greatly changed with the times, some of their old features may still generally be found lingering. One of them retains the rough masonry of its

original foundations; another, resting on this, has a wood framework, painted in black and white; a third has a quaint old wainscoted room, with a priest's chamber or hiding place, an ornamented ceiling, or a solid oak staircase, showing the taste of our ancestors and the manner in which they built their homes, while round most of them traces of the old moats may still be seen.

To particularize some of these houses, we may name Peel Hall, in Great Sankey, which was once the seat of a branch of the Rixtons, and passed from them by the marriage of Elizabeth Rixton, an heiress of that house, with Theophilus Lynch, of Warrington, gentleman, the father of Sir Thomas Lynch, who was Governor of Jamaica in the middle of the seventeenth century. At no great distance from Peel Hall was The Hall of Little Sankey, the former seat of the Sankeys, and over the door of which is a fading shield of arms, which was probably theirs. This house, which retains some other marks of antiquity, passed from the Sankeys, its original owners, to Sir Thomas Ireland early in the same century. A third house which may be mentioned is Bradley Hall, in Appleton, Cheshire, once the manor place of Sir Thomas Danyers the younger, a great soldier, who worthily won his spurs at Crescy and in other fields of fame, though his whole domain at Bradley contained only a few acres—and the house is now a farm house. A fourth such house was Woolston Hall, in Woolston, where the great family of the Hawardens had their seat, which passed from them by marriage to the Standishes, and is now a farm house belonging to a purchaser from them. A fifth of these manor places is Rixton Hall, near Hollins Green, once the seat of the parent house of Rixton, but which in the middle of the last century was acquired by purchase from

them by the family of Lord Winmarleigh, one of whose farmers now occupies it. A sixth manor house is that of Bruche Hall, in Poulton, near Warrington, of which we shall have more to say, and to which therefore we shall devote a longer notice.



CHAPTER II.

BRUCHE HALL.

THIS place, one of those already above referred to, and of which we propose to give a detailed account, is supposed to have owed its name to the way in which the name of the Birch tree was pronounced by the common people in olden times. This tree loves a heathy soil and within living memory it grew in large numbers in the hamlet of Bruche. Our Saxon ancestors found for their vills, hamlets, and places names of a very simple origin—a cliff, the stock of a tree, an abundance of sand, or a great growth of rushes gave name to Clifton, Stockton, Sankey and Risley. The names of places which have not a similar origin in this neighbourhood are rare: Bryn, Culcheth, Kenyon, Glazebrooke, Douglas, Bollin, Penketh, and Kinkenall, which in part or in whole have a British sound, being the only exceptions that occur to the writer.

The boundaries of Bruche, which is a hamlet in the township of Poulton, are so exactly described in the Lyme manuscript of 1465, that we have no difficulty in identifying them at the present time :—"The manor of Bruche with its appurtenances" (thus runs the description) "lies and is situate on the south side of a certain heath called Le Bruche Heath, and extends from thence towards a certain lane lead-

ing from the town of Warrington, as far as the town of Wulston, and so from the said lane as far as the water of Mersee, which same manor and all its members and demesne lands with their appurtenances lie in breadth between a certain brook called Le Bruche brook on the west and another brook called the Wulston brook on the east.”*

The manor, which was never more than of a moderate extent, was one of many such properties which were owned by proprietors who bore coat armour, wrote themselves gentlemen “in any bill, warrant, quittance or obligation,” and formed a class of small squirearchy which were once as valuable as they were numerous in the community. They were of that class which King James said were the happiest in England, for they were below a justice of the peace and above a parish constable. They were as independent as the yeomanry, were somewhat richer than they; and while they were better educated, they were also able by farming some part of their own demesnes to set an example in farming to the mere husbandmen. Bruche had its proprietor who took his name from the place long before 1465, bore for his arms *argent* a chevron *sable* between three mullets of the *same*, as we know from “Papworth’s Ordinary of British Armorial,” and as we shall be able to show from an example. Burke also in his Armorial gives the family these arms and also the crest as having both been allowed to them at the visitation in 1563 or 1567 under the name of Britch. If the rude drawing of a coat of arms formerly in the church of the Austin Friars at Warrington, which on a shield *argent* bore a chevron *sable* between three estoiles of the *same*, were meant for the arms of Bruche (though if that be so the

* Warrington in 1465, Chet. So. pp. 68-9.

copyist by his bad drawing has substituted estoiles for mullets) then it is possible that these arms, which some antiquaries have been puzzled at finding there, were meant to commemorate the Bruches as benefactors of the priory; and if this be so a gift of the closes called the Friar Closes in Bruche may have gained them the good will and prayers of the Warrington Friars, and led to their thus acknowledging the gift.



CHAPTER III.

Non de villis domibusve alienis agitamus.

POULTON, the township in which Bruche is situated, and of which it is the Manor Place, was from the first, as it continues to be at this day, a part of the fee or barony of Newton in Makerfield. Towards the latter end of the reign of Henry III., or early in that of Edward I., and before the statute of *quia emptores terrarum*, one of the barons of Newton granted totam villam de Poulton (the whole vill of Poulton) to Alicia, the daughter of Gilbert de Haydock; and in 1285, Robert Banastre, the then baron, confirmed totam terram de Poulton (all the land of Poulton) to Robert de Moston, and Alicia his wife. The effect of this grant, however, was merely a subinfeudation, making Poulton a mesne manor to be held by the grantees, under the barony of Newton. But the family of Bruche, into whose hands Bruche, which was carved out of the mesne manor, early came, became also landowners in Warrington by the grant either of its Lord William fitz Almeric le Boteler, or his successor, William fitz Henry le Boteler, between the time of Henry III. and Edward II., to Adam del Breche, one of his retainers and the first of the family of whom we have any notice. In 16 Edw. I., 1288, the King

notified to the Sheriff of Lancashire that Richard de Samelsbury at the court at Lancaster in an assise of novel disseisin had recovered against Adam del Breche and Margaret his wife, Henry fitz Gilbert de Penketh, Richard his brother, and Robert de Penketh seisin of common of pasture belonging to his freehold tenement in Werrington* and Adam and his said wife Margaret in 20 Ed. I., 1292, recovered against Richard fitz Gilbert de Penketh and others seisin of one-third of two messuages, 40 acres of land, 50 acres of pasture, and 50 acres of wood in Penketh.† Adam held Bruche by knight service, which of all services was the most honorable. He who held his land by it was liable to (1) aids, payments for making the lord's son a knight or marrying his daughter; (2) reliefs for taking up the inheritance on a tenant's death; (3) wardship of an infant heir; (4) marriage of the heir; (5) fines on every alienation; (6) escheat on failure of heirs or the commission of treason or felony. These consequences of tenure by knight's service, which were often burdensome, made it as onerous as it was honourable. No copy, however, of the first grant of Bruche by that name has come down to us. Henry del Bruche, Adam's son and successor in 1317, was receiver of rents for the honour of Halton,‡ and he appears as a witness to three of the Boteler deeds in the 17th and 18th years of Edward II., and in 3 Edward III; he appears again as a witness to a Warburton deed.§ These show him to have been a person of some consequence; and another deed dated 23rd June, 2 Ed. III., 1328, which we give *in extenso*, shows him to have been a grantee of some property from William le

* Abbreviatio Rot. original, p. 58. † Ibidem, 73.

‡ Halton and Norton, 36.

§ Arley Charters, Box IV., No. 41.

Boteler. This deed is as follows :—"To all the faithful in Christ, who shall see or hear this present writing, Alan de Rixton sendeth greeting in the Lord : know ye that I have granted, released, and for me and my heirs for ever quit claimed to Henry de Bruche and his heirs all the right which I have or by any means could or might have in certain places of moor, marsh, and pasture land in the town of Werington, by reason of any common of pasture, which same places the lord William le Boteler, of Werington, granted, and by his certain charter confirmed to the said Henry. So that neither I, the said Alan, nor my heirs, nor any other person in my name, shall be able to claim any right by reason of common of pasture in the aforesaid places, in witness whereof I have to this present writing affixed my seal. These being witnesses: William de Moston, Richard de Wolston, Robert de Moston, Nicholas le Norrays, Robert Dun, and others. Dated at Werington, on Thursday, the eve of St. John the Baptist's day."* Notwithstanding that the pasture is here said to be in Warrington, it was very probably a part of the Bruche estate, which might have a right of intercommoning outside the manor.

We have no inquisitions post-mortem to guide us at this time ; but it seems probable that Henry del Bruche was succeeded by a Richard del Birches, whom we find witnessing a Culcheth deed, to which William le Boteler was a party about this time. Richard must have been a person of some importance, for his name occurs as one of the commissioners for assessing the Inquisitiones nonarum in 15 Ed. III., 1342.

On the 7th Oct. 41 Edward III., 1367, we have an unexpected notice of the name of John de Bruche ; who having

* From the original in the possession of J. F. Marsh, Esq.

taken up a brown heifer as a stray, took it to Halton Court, where Richard Thompson "eam hameliavit duodecimā manu," that is brought twelve men to prove the heifer his, and gave fourteen pence for "Budfee."

This John, who thus showed so honest an anxiety to restore a lost cow to its owner, may have been a cadet of the house of Bruche.

In the reign of Richard II., however, we have several notices of Gilbert del Bruche, who was then undoubtedly the head of the house of Bruche. In 5 Richard II. he was a witness to Robert de Whetell's grant of land in Warrington; and in the following year he took a lease from Henry de Risle of a parcel of land lying in the Twiste (a place which still retains its name), within the bounds of Bruche. On 25 May, 11 Ric. II., 1388, he was one of the jurors on the inquisition post-mortem of Johannes de Haydock, and on 5 August, 14 Ric. II., 1390, he was a juror on the inquisition post-mortem of Thomas Sharpe* and at the Thelwall court, 16 Ric. II., 1393, he is put down as holding of the Duke of Lancaster Aketon yard (fish yard). In 21 Richard II., Bruchefield in territorio de Weryngton is expressly mentioned to be in the occupation of Gilbert del Bruche,† and on 29th March in the same year Peter del Bruche, a cadet of the House, entered the King's body guard of Cheshire archers, and was to be paid 6d. a day for his services.‡

As we, unfortunately, have no inquisitions of the family to guide us, we do not know very accurately the time when Gilbert del Bruche, whom we last saw in possession of Bruche, died. It is, however, almost certain that he had

* Lanc. Inq., Chet. So pp. 31, 40.

† Hale deeds.

‡ Cheshire Records.

left the scene before the accession of Henry VI.; for on 13th December, in the year 1431, we find a William Breache (the spelling of old names is always very variable) in possession of the estate, and that he had then a grown-up son. The deed which makes this known to us, and which we venture to set out at length, is as follows:—"This endenture beres witness that there was certen variance and debate for divers trespass that has byen hade betwene Nicholas, of Rysley, and Dykone, his sone, apon the tone party and William of the Breche, and Richard his son, apon the th'other partie of the queche variaunce and debate, the sayd parties ben boundene to abide and performe the ordenaunce and dome of me, Richard Stanley, Archdcn. of Chestre; and as I, the said Richard, have herd the chalanges and answare of bothe the sayd parties by gode deliberacion, and for as mecul as I fynd the trespass more done to the said Nicholas than as done to the said William, I ordaine, deme and awarde the sayd William to deliver to the sayde Nicholas a hoggshed of wyn at Weryngton, als gode als the sayde Nicholas will chose of rede or quoyt betwene this and the fest of the annunciation of oure Laydy next, suying after the date of this awarde or elles to pay to the said Nicholas ij. marks of monee at the election of the said Nicholas, and gyf the sayd Nicholas schose to the sayd payment of the ij. marcs, and refuse the sayd hoggshed of wyne, I ordeigne and awarde the sayd William to pay to the sayd Nicholas the sayd ij. marcs, that is to wete i. marc at the fest of St. Hilare day next suyinge after the date of these endentures; and j. marc at the fest of Pasche that next suyinge; and also I, the sayd Richard, ordene deme and awarde the sayd parties to be full frendes for all maner trespass that has byn hade betwene thayme fro the begynninge of the world unto

the day of the gyfying of this sayd awarde, excepte ryghte of lond. In wetines of qwyche thyng I, the sayd Richard, to either partie of this endenture have sette my seale. Gyfyn at Wynwhike, upon Thursday next after the conception of our Layde the yere of the reigne of Kyng Harry the sext the tent."*

Besides being curious in itself as an early specimen of English, this instrument gives us some glimpses of Warrington as it was more than four centuries ago. Two fathers and two sons having disagreed about some trespasses, not as it would seem about land, a father and a son on one side and the other father and son on the opposite side, agreed instead of going to law to submit their differences to Richard Stanley, son of the second Sir John Stanley, who was then archdeacon of Chester, and afterwards rector of Winwick, and a neighbour of the differing parties. The arbitrator seems to have taken pains to satisfy himself about the merits of the case, and to have understood how to find out an elixir to heal a quarrel between neighbours when he awarded a vessel of wine to wipe it out. The hogshead contained sixty-three gallons; and one pound six shillings and eightpence, the price at which he fixed it, would give us rather more than fivepence a gallon as the price of wine in Warrington market. We may suppose that the wine was brought to Warrington by water, as the charter of the 5th July, 3 Ed. II., expressly imposes a toll upon merchandise so brought thither. Wine at fivepence a gallon at Warrington four centuries ago was not dear. It was probably imported from Bordeaux, which place had long had its merchants seeking custom in England, as we find from

* Hale Deeds and Liverpool Hist. So. Proceedings, 1851, p. 104.

charters in some of the neighbouring muniment rooms. On Sunday, 2nd July, 1329, William Corp, one of these merchants, bound himself in one tun of good *must* to choose and deliver to Walter le Taverner, a vintner of Kingston-upon-Hull, the choicest of his six best tuns of wine which he should have at Bordeaux after the ensuing vintage.* Let us hope that the Bruches the losing parties met their opponents to drown their quarrel in a cup of wine, and that the venerable Archdeacon, the arbitrator, was invited to be present on the occasion and witness the reconciliation.

William de Breche, the father, who was party to the award in 10 Hen. VI. (1431), was dead in 1441, and had been succeeded by his son Richard de Breche, who had also been a party to the award. On 24th June in that year we meet with him as a juror on the inquisition on Isabella Boteler of Bewsey, and in 1454 he was attending his patron Sir John Boteler, knight, when the latter, on 1st Jan., 31 Hen. VI. (1454), made a family settlement of his estates, to which Richard was one of the witnesses.† And we find him again on March 14, 3 Ed. IV. (1463), when Gilbert de Riseley, one of his old opponents in the award, with whom his old quarrel must have been long made up, settled his estates on his son, and called in Sir William Harington, knight, and Richard de Breche to witness the settlement.‡ But of the possessions of this Richard del Bruche (for the old spelling was now resumed) there is this account in the 6 Ed. IV. (1465):—“Richard del Bruche,” says the record, “holds of Peter Legh one half of the manor of Bruche *in capite* by knight’s

* Arley Charters, B. 24, No. 40.

† Boteler deeds.

‡ Hale deeds.

service, * with all the members, messuages, demesne and other lands and tenements to the same belonging, which manor, with its appurtenances, lies and is situated on the south side of a certain heath called Le Bruche Heath, and extends from thence towards a certain lane leading from the town of Warrington as far as the town of Wulstone, and so from the said lane as far as the water of Mersee which said messuage (*i.e.*, the hall of Bruche), and all its members and demesne lands with their appurtenances lie in breadth between a certain brook called Le Bruche brook on the west and a certain other brook called the Wulstone brook on the east, which said half of the manor aforesaid, with the appurtenances, renders to the said Peter Legh xiid. yearly for chief rent. The said Richard del Bruche also holds of the said Peter Legh *in capite* by the said service one messuage, with a garden, called Le Barbur's, land thereto adjoining in a certain street of the town of Warrington, called Le Kirk-street, lying in length of the said messuage and in breadth of the said garden between a messuage, late of Henry Fysher and bequeathed (by him) to the High church of Warrington on the east, and an empty burgage late of Roger Arosmythe and Henry Garnet on the west, and extending in length of the said garden and in breadth of the said messuage from Kirk-street aforesaid on the south as far as the garden of the said Roger in the tenure of William Holme on the north, which messuage and garden render to the said Peter Legh xivd. yearly for chief rent. The said Richard del Bruche also holds of the

* It would seem from this record that one half the entire manor of Poulton, granted to Robert de Moston, and Alicia his wife, had in some way before this time devolved on Peter, afterwards Sir Peter Legh.

said Peter Legh two burgages lying in Kirk-street, in the town of Warrington, *in capite*, with one bovate of land lying in Hollay (Howley), Arpley, and Pflot hull, with one piece of land called Rawrydyng, which contains four acres of land, and he holds by charter all the aforesaid, which are worth iijs. viijd."† Some of this land, we are told, was held by John Pasmethe, glover, as Richard del Bruche's tenant. Again, under the head of chief rent, in Overforthe, belonging to Peter Legh, we read:—"The said Richard holds of the aforesaid Peter Legh *in capite* one messuage, with two gardens and five crofts, together with one parcel of meadow land, in the tenure of James Sothurn lying in the hamlet of Overforthe by Warrington, which gardens, crofts, and their appurtenances contain together nine acres of arable and meadow land, and lie on the south part of a lane in Overforthe, nearly opposite a messuage of the said Peter, in the holding of William Cooper, and extend in length from the aforesaid lane on the north as far as to a certain brook called Rysshelfelde brook, which runs between the land of the said Richard Bruche and Warrington heath on the south, which messuage and lands yield to the said Peter a yearly chief rent of ——. Also the said Richard Bruche holds of the said Peter Legh, *in capite*, in Overforthe aforesaid, another messuage, with a barn, garden, three crofts, and a parcel of meadow, containing in the whole eight acres of arable and meadow land, extending in length from the said lane on the north as far as the aforesaid rivulet called Rysshelfelde brooke on the south, and to the east of the aforesaid messuage of the said Richard Bruche in the tenure of the said James Sothurn and the said messuage, barn, garden, crofts, and meadow of the said Richard are now in the tenure

† Legh Rent Roll, printed in Warrington, in 1465. Chet. So., 64, 69.

of William Cowper, which premises render to the said Peter, (here for the first time called Sir Peter Legh, knight) the rent of xvs. vid. yearly."* He also held of the said Sir Peter Legh a messuage and three small fields in Sankey Magna, and eight other acres of land there.†

It would seem as if the Bruche name were popular in Warrington at that time, for one of the landowners had a field in Arpley which he called Le Bruche hey.‡ Peter Bruche, if, as is probable, he was the same person who in youth had entered as one of King Richard II.'s Cheshire body guard as an archer, in his old age kept a shop at the Warrington Market Gate.§ Robert Bruche, another of the family, seems to have had a house on the north side of Sankey-street, where, as was not unusual with the younger sons of the gentry at that time, he probably carried on some branch of business.|| Up to this time we have been unable to give any of the Bruche alliances, but now we find that Richard del Bruche married Margaret, the daughter of Sir Peter Legh, the author of the Lyme MS., and from this time we shall be able to give most of the family marriages.

* Ib. 140.

§ Ib. p. 60.

† Ib.

|| Ib. 20, 22, 26.

‡ Ib. 98.



CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD DEL BRUCHE, who married Margaret, the daughter of Sir Peter Legh, knight, and of whose holdings under Sir Peter we have had so full an account, appears to have lived on until 1476; and on 26th March, in that year, he was witness to a charter made by Petronilla, late the wife of John Culcheth.* He died, however, shortly after that time, and was succeeded by his son, Henry del Bruche, who died in the year 1485, having probably fallen fighting against the usurper Richard at Bosworth. Sir Thos. Boteler is believed to have raised a contingent and joined forces with Lord Strange in the march to Bosworth, and Henry del Bruche's death synchronises with the date of the usurper's overthrow and death. On 29th September, 2 Henry VII., (1486,) Hugh del Bruche, Henry del Bruche's son, and Dowce, his wife, made a lease of two parcels of land called the Horse heys, in Fearnhead, to John Sothern, and Margaret his wife, for the term of thirty-nine years, paying ten shillings a year as rent, and rendering these strange services, viz, "a day's service of a plough, a day of a moke cart, three days chering, and three rent hennes."† We meet with the next appearance of Hugh del Bruche in the following account, which we take from one

* Hale deeds.

† Bruche deeds.

of the Chetham volumes. "The 13th January, 5 Hen. VII., (1490,) seems to have been a red letter day in the Bewsey Annals, for Sir Thomas Boteler, attended by the honourable Thomas Hawardyn, lieutenant justice of Chester, (under the Earl of Derby) and Lord Strange, Hamon Penketh, Richard Birkenhead, Henry Garnet, esquires, and others, with his steward, Henry Doker, as master of the ceremonies, then sat to receive the homage of some of his tenants and feudal retainers. Amongst these was Randle Sankey, who did homage and paid xs. for his relief of a carucate of land (one-tenth part of a knight's fee) in Little Sankey, which his father of the same name, then lately dead, a descendant probably of the John Sankey who fell at Agincourt, had held under the house of Bewsey. Another tenant, Hugh del Bruche, who had succeeded to the lands his father Henry del Bruche had held in Sankey and Orford, next appeared and did homage."* On 19th July, 15 Hen. VII. (1500), Hugh del Bruche, and Hamon his son and heir apparent, granted to John Bruche (Hugh's brother) for his life three closes of land in the parish of Warrington, one of which was called the Locker's Meadow, another the Warth, and the third the Thickholt. James Bruche, chaplain, probably another of Hugh's brothers, was one of the attorneys appointed to give seisin, and Henry Doker, then bailiff of Warrington, was one of the witnesses. Before 20 Hen. VII. in the year 1504, Hugh del Bruche was dead, and Hamon his son by his wife Dowce, who was in possession of Bruche on the 13th October in that year, was made a feoffee in trust of Henry de Risley's lands.† On the 16th August, 22 Hen. VII., (1505,) Hamon

* Annals of the Lords of Warrington, Chet. So., 349.

† Hale deeds.

Bruche was plaintiff in two actions against a Mr. Cartwright at the Halton court.* In the year 1506, when Sir Thomas Boteler had a full crop of homages paid him, we read that on one occasion Bartholomew Holcrofte, Thurstan Tildesley (the same who was afterwards member for Lancashire), Henry Halsall, John Ashton of Penketh, Hamon Ashton of Glazebrooke, who paid vis. for his relief, Thomas Whitehull, Henry Yorescolles, and Henry Sale of Bedford, did homage before Hamon Bruche, Esquire, Richard Massey and William Penketh, chaplains, and Oliver Berdsley, the rich Warrington draper, whose widow married a Leicester of Tabley.† Hamon Bruche died in the year 1508, leaving both his mother Dowce and his own wife Elizabeth surviving him, and upon his death a law question arose which troubled his liege lord, Sir Thomas Boteler. Hamon Bruchehaving held under him, by knight's service and a rent certain, his capital mansion or chief place of Bruche, and his lands in Werryngton, Sankey, and other places, Sir Thomas was entitled to the wardship and keeping of the body and lands of Richard, the said Hamon's son and heir, but this seemingly undoubted right was called in question by John Massie, Esquire, of Rixton, Hamon Massie, Esquire, of Sale, John Duncalfe and Richard Bold, gentleman, and Lawrence Balfront, chaplain, the late Hamon's feoffees. Upon this a controversy arose, which after some parleying the parties agreed to refer to William Hondeforde and Richard Sneyde, Esquires, and they swore upon the Holy Gospels to abide their award. The arbitrators having entered upon the matter on the 1st of July in the above year, found that the deceased

* Halton rolls.

† Annals of the Lords of Warrington, Chet. So., 363.

being greatly in debt while his children were under age, enfeofed the said John Massie and the rest in all his lands to the intent that they should perform his last will, which the arbitrators found valid as to a part but invalid as to the rest ; wherefore they awarded that the said feoffees should deliver to the said Sir Thos. Boteler xi^s yearly for his own use during the nonage of the said Richard Bruche, and that they should occupy the remainder without prejudice to the dower of Dowce Bruche, mother of the said Hamon, and of Elizabeth his late wife.*

Hamon Bruche, as we have seen, died in 1508, the year before Henry VIII. came to the throne. His son, Richard Bruche, who was a minor at his father's death, must have come of age before 6th Oct., 15 Hen. VIII. (1523); for on that day when Sir William Griffith and others feoffees of the Boteler estates, held a court leet and view of frank pledge for the manor of Warrington, Richard Bruche, Esquire, amongst the numerous suitors of the Court, appeared in person to do his suit and service. William Bruche and Thomas Bruche, who are both mentioned in the proceedings, were probably his brothers. William had been challenged to fight, and Thomas's servant had been assaulted and the assailants were fined in each case.†

On the 21st October following, Richard Bruche demised to Katherine Erlestolles and Henry Slynehead a close of land in Great Sankey called the Bryne field, with "yard stydd" lying in it, for a term of twenty years, at the yearly rent of four shillings.‡

* Annals of the Lords of Warrington and authority there cited, 377.

† Annals of the Lords of Warrington, Chet. So., pp. 430-431.

‡ Hale deeds.

Richard Bruche married Anne, the daughter of Thomas Hawarden, of Hawarden, in the county of Flint, the same, we suppose, who was called the Honourable Thomas Hawardyn, lieutenant justice of Chester, and who in 1519 was deputy recorder of Chester and clerk of the Mayor's and Sheriff's courts there.*

Though his father had died in debt, the example does not seem to have produced its proper effect in warning him from following in the same steps. There is an official about the Court of Chancery called the chaff wax, or green wax officer, whose business is to seal certain documents in order to authenticate them. He is described in Latin as *calefactor ceræ qui regiis literis in cancellaria imprimit*. The father of Chaucer, the poet, is said to have held this office of chaff wax, which derives its name from *chaud cire* (hot wax), which is supposed to be the origin of the Court poet's father's name. Mr. Bruche, it would seem, had had the services of the clerk of the green wax and owed him money for them; but it was easier for him to contract than to pay a debt, and in the 19 Hen. VIII. (1527), one Giles Lever, the clerk of the green wax, having sued him for payment, he and Hamlet Holbrook having rescued the goods which had been seized under an execution for the debt, were then sued for the rescue.† In 22 Henry VIII. (1530), there seems to have been ill blood between Richard Bruche and the Bewsey family, his liege lords. For some supposed offence he had threatened to burn and destroy some of their houses and tenements in Warrington and Winwick.‡ For this threat he was sued by

* Examinations touching Cockey Moor., Chet. So., xxxvii., 25.

† Duchy Calendar of Proceedings, p. 136.

‡ Ib. p. 142.

Thomas Boteler, who also sought to recover from him a close of land called the Orchard Croft.* Some mutual friends, however, interfered to make peace, and Thomas Boteler, with his sureties, Sir Thomas Southworth, of Samlesbury, and Roger Bradshaigh, of Haigh, signed a bond to submit all matters in dispute between him and Richard Bruche, Esq., to the award, arbitrament, and final determination of Sir William Leyland, knight, Sir Alexander Osbaldeston, knight, Henry Haryngton, Esquire, and Edward Molyneux, clerk.† But in spite of this agreement, the quarrel, as we shall see, proved to be of long continuance and was not so soon ended. So true is the proverb that strife is like the pouring out of water on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. In 23 Hen. VIII. (1532), while the dispute was still going on, Thomas Boteler, on the 1st March, signed another bond anew referring the settlement to Sir Alexander Radcliff and Sir William Leyland, Knights.‡ We are apt to give our ancestors more credit for simplicity in their legal documents than they deserve; for in any difference, instead of one writing they had on each side frequently several, which acted as a counterpoise to each other. In this Bruche quarrel Sir Thomas Southworth, as the surety of Thomas Boteler, on 28th March, 24 Hen. VIII. (1533), gave a bond for £400 to Richard Bruche, Esquire, with a condition that it should be void upon Sir Thomas observing the award of Gowther Legh, Thomas Grymesdyche, and Lawrence Ireland, gentlemen; and if they should make no such award then upon such award as Thomas Fayrfax and Robert Challoner,

* Duchy Calendar of Proceedings, p. 136.

† Lord Lilford's Deeds.

‡ Legh Papers.

learned in law, should make; and if they should make none, then as Anthony Fitzherbert, the king's chief justice at Lancaster, should make. This had probably reference to the former bond into which Sir Thomas had entered as surety for Thomas Boteler, and Richard Bruche on his part had probably given a counter-bond to Sir Thomas Southworth to the like effect. But the difference was not yet ended; for on the 5th November, 1534, Thomas Boteler, who had now become Sir Thomas, again joined Richard Bruche, Esquire, in a general bond referring all their differences to John Birkened, Esquire, "learned in the law," and John Grymesdiche, son of Thomas Grymesdiche, of Halam.* This last move might have resulted from an action which Mr. Bruche had brought against Sir Thomas Boteler in consequence of the latter having claimed certain arrears of rent for Bruche Hall, and other lands in Poulton, Great Sankey, and other places.† Mr. Bruche seems, however, to have been a person in whom some of his neighbours confided; for one Henry Southworth, of Much Sankey, when he was about to make a settlement of his estates, conveyed them to Richard Bruche, of the Bruche, esquire, James Blundell, of Ince, and Nicholas Johnson, gentleman; and by an indenture of 23rd Oct., 28th Hen. VIII., (1536), they conveyed such estates of the said Henry Southworth, in Middleton, Houghton, and Arbury, as they had of his gift to the said Henry for life, with remainder to Margaret, Ellen, Ann, Margery, and Alice, his daughters; and the longest liver of them paying yearly a peppercorn rent. Mr. Bruche seems, however, to have found no remedy for the consumption in his purse; for on the 29th:

* Duchy^m Calender, p. 142.

† Legh Papers.

November, 30 Hen. VIII., he was borrowing money from John Fletewode, of London, gentleman, to whom he gave a bond with a surety for £40 conditioned to be void on the payment of £25.



CHAPTER V.

ON the 26th November, 28 Hen. VIII. (1536) we meet with another instance of the confidence reposed in Richard Bruche by his neighbours the Rysleys. Richard Rysley, the then head of that family, by an indenture of feoffment conveyed to John Holcrofte, Richard Bruche, and Gilbert Culcheth, esquires, and Sir James Bruche, clerk, of whom we shall hear more, a tenement in Culcheth, another in Penketh, and a rent of two shillings in Culcheth, in trust to hold the same for the use of John Rysley, Richard's brother, for life. This deed is remarkable for its being witnessed by Henry Johnson, the curate of Winwick, whose name is recorded on the church there as the contemporary of the repairer of that church in 1533 in these Latin lines upon the cornice of that church:—

Anno milleno quingento triceno
Sclater post Christum
Murum renovaverat istum.
Henricus Johnson curatus erat simul hic tunc.

In fifteen hundred and just three times ten
Sclater restored and built this wall again
And Henry Johnson here was curate then.

The old quarrel of the Bruches with the Botelers now

assumed a new phase, and like the quarrel between the Montagues and the Capulets, it was taken up by their servants. Humphrey Wood and Thomas Starkey, servants to Sir Thomas Boteler, having taken and detained one Richard, son of Randle Harp, a servant of the Bruches, Richard Bruche, esquire, came forward to bail him; whereupon Sir William Leyland, the high sheriff, issued his warrant to Humphrey Wood and Thomas Starkey to appear at Lancaster to answer the charge which would seem to have been referred to the settlement of Sir William Leyland and Sir William Norreys, Sir Thomas Boteler entering into surety faithfully to observe their award.* On the 23rd June, 1540, as Sir Thomas Boteler was in the house of Isabel Clerk, a sort of tavern in Warrington, his son Thomas, with Richard Bruche and others, entered the house with swords and daggers drawn, and having called Sir Thomas's servants foul names, challenged them to come out and fight, and they struck at and would have murdered one of them if they had not been hindered.† As neither Sir Thomas Boteler nor Richard Bruche were young at this time, this scene, a sort of brawl, which occurred in a tavern, was alike discreditable to both of them as gentlemen. In 35 Henry VIII., (1543,) Richard Bruche, calling himself the lessee of Warrington parsonage,‡ sued Sir Thomas Boteler for the profits, and on the 8th October, 4 Ed. VI., (1550), he and his son John were witnesses to a settlement made by Thomas Sankey, of Little Sankey.* On January 25th 6 Ed. VI. (1553) Richard Bruche demised a close of land in his demesne of Bruche, to Ellen,

* *Annals of the Lords of Warrington*, p. 450.

† *Ib.*, 482.

‡ *Calr. of Duchy Pro.*, val. ii. 77.

‡ *Culcheth deeds*.

late the wife of Richard Fearnhead, gentleman, for the term of six years ; and on the 5th Feb.,* 2 and 3 Philip and Mary (1556), calling himself esquire, he and Thomas, his son, and heir apparent, leased to Anthony Bruche, another of Richard's sons, the closes called Sondyecroft and Bryddes Croft otherwise Breadcroft in Bruche, within Poulton, to hold to the said Anthony and such woman as he should first marry and take to wife for their lives, paying yearly the rent of thirteen shillings and four pence.† Very soon after this, Richard Bruche died having made a will and appointed Sir Thomas Venables and William Hyde executors and leaving issue by his wife Anne Hawarden, the following children : —(1) Thomas, his eldest son, who succeeded to the family estates. (2) John, who died without issue. (3) Anthony, to whom the before mentioned lease was made as a marriage provision. (4) Sir James Bruche, clerk, parson of Cold Norton, in Essex, who having the unenviable family propensity for getting into debt, on 11th May, 28 Hen. VIII. (1536), demised to his brother William Bruche, citizen and merchant tailor, of London, all his benefice or parsonage of Cold Norton, with all the glebe and tithes to the same belonging for three years, paying therefor £7 6s. 8d. a year, William finding a clerk to supply the cure, paying all charges and keeping the house in repair, the latter only to extend to "thatching and daubing." This living, which is now in the gift of the Charter House, is valued at £328 a year, so that William Bruche must have got the lease of it on very easy terms. (5) William Bruche, the citizen and merchant tailor‡ of London, just named, seems to have been a money lender ;

* Bruche deeds.

† Ibid

‡ The motto of this great company is, *Sit merita laus*, which thus popularly interpreted is, "Sit merry tailors."

for on 23 Feb., 28 Hen. VIII., (1537), he lent a sum of money to Henry Rysley, of Rysley, esquire, which Henry and his surety gave him his bond to repay at such time as Henry should be proved to be the right heir of the lordship or manor of Rysley, or at other such time as the said Henry should be lawfully married to any woman in holy church or chapel, but if Henry should die after the time of his being so proved to be heir or married, his executors were to pay the money.* On 4 Feb., 34 Hen. VIII., (1543), letters patent were issued under the duchy seal, which recited that upon a trial in court it was proved that Nicholas, Henry Rysley's son, was the rightful heir and owner of the Rysley estates, so that the money he had borrowed from Wm. Bruche had not been thrown away.† In 1539 Sir Thomas Boteler, whose pecuniary difficulties forced him to have dealings with those whom he would otherwise have avoided, induced him to make William Bruche a trustee of the lease of Warrington parsonage, which he (Sir Thomas) had taken from Edward Keble, the rector.‡ But he seems soon to have repented of this misplaced confidence, for the next year he sued him for detaining the title deeds of the rectory.§ Nor was William Bruche more in favour with Edward Keble, the rector, who having borrowed money from him in 31 Hen. VIII., (1540), filed a bill against him in the Duchy Court, in which he calls him "a very unruly person and a great unquieter of his poor neighbours." The bill, which gives a curious insight into the manners of the time, alleges that the complainant having been ordered by the Court to pay William Bruche 50

* Hale Deeds.

† Ibid.

‡ Annals of the Lords of Warrington, 449.

§ Duchy Calr. of Pleadings, 160.

marks, and being unable to pay him the money so ordered, the said William, "after the old cruel manner," would not forbear the payment unless he would make the 50 marks into the same number of pounds; and further would give him security for it.* (6) Thurstan. (7) Edward. (8) Elizabeth, married Charles Curteis and was living at 12 Eliz. (9) Alice. †

* Calendar of Duchy Proceedings, 261.

† Duchy Calendar, II., 361.



CHAPTER VI.

THOMAS BRUCHE, Esquire, must have come of age long before his father's decease ; for in 33 Henry VIII., (1541,) he and his first wife Margaret, daughter of Piers Legh, of Bradley, joined in making a lease of lands. In 1558 he succeeded to the family estates as the eldest son and heir of his father Richard Bruche, and very soon afterwards, being in want of money, he sold to Sir Peter Legh, knight, his estates in Great Sankey, and after the fashion of those times, on 7th October, 3 Eliz., (1561), he gave Sir Peter his bond for £200, conditioned to be void on his establishing and confirming him in the Sankey estate, according to the deed of conveyance of it, which he had made him.† After the death of Margaret his first wife, he married for his second wife Sibil, daughter of Sir George Holford and relict of John Warburton, and claiming to be seized of his estate in fee, he seems to have made one Robt. Kenyan a lease of the Twyste, in Poulton, for which, after his decease, his trustees were sued by Kenyan's representatives.* Thomas Bruche died in 7 Eliz., (1565), leaving Sibil, his second wife, surviving. By Margaret, his first wife, he left four children, (1) Hamlet, the eldest son, (2) Roger, who on the 25th Jan., 21 Eliz., (1579),

* Bruche deeds.

† Duchy Calr. II., 312.

sold two fields called the Thick Holtes and the Thyn Holtes, in Poulton, to Sir Peter Legh, knight, and received from him £40 towards a sum of £60, which was the amount of the purchase money.* Roger, who married a wife named Alice and survived to 45 Eliz. (1602), had the family propensity for running into debt; and in 36 Eliz. (1594), when he came to some agreement with his creditors, and had to make out a list of his debts, they were found to amount to £510 9s. od. Amongst his creditors were these names; John Daniels of Daresbury, £24 os. od. The Countess of Rutland, £50 os. od.; John Southworth, £10. The schoolmaster of Warrington, £10. His wife, £3. It is not so difficult as at first sight, it seems, to see how he came to count these several persons amongst his creditors. One of them, John Daniel, was the squire of Daresbury, and his not distant neighbour. Another of them, the Countess of Rutland, was Isabel, the daughter of Sir Thomas Holcroft, of Vale Royal in Cheshire, and widow of Edward, third earl of Rutland, and the last two were John Wakefield, then head master of the Boteler Free Grammar School at Warrington, and Mary his wife. (3) Jane; (4) Anne; and by Sibil his second wife, he had (5) a son Richard. On the 18th Jan., 8 Eliz. (1566) Sibil, late wife of Thomas Bruche, esquire, deceased, demised to Hamlet Bruche, his eldest son, all those messuages, in the occupation of Thomas Penkethman, Randle Yate, Thomas Yate, Evan Owens Elizabeth Holbrooke, and Anthony Bruche, all belonging to the manor of Bruche, and which had been allotted to Sibil as part of her dower, and which Hamlet was to hold for Sibil's life, at the rent of £5 6s. 8d.† In 1564 or 1567

* Bruche deeds.

† Ibid.

the Bruches entered their pedigree and were allowed their arms at the heralds' visitation, a copy of which is in one of the Chetham volumes in the Warrington Museum. On 20th Jan., 11 Eliz. (1569), Hamlet Bruche, of Bruche, esquire, demised to Richard Houghton, of Fearnhead, gentleman, the closes called the Friar closes, and the greater Highfields, belonging to Bruche Hall, for the term of three years at the rent of three pounds a year.† The acreage of these lands is not mentioned, or, as this was a farm lease, we should have known the rate that land was these let at. On 22nd Sept., 13 Eliz. (1571), Mr. Bruche made a lease to Hugh Heapy, of Fearnhead, yeoman, and Thomas Penkethman, Adam Yate, Richard Holbrooke, and Evan Owen, of the same place, husbandmen, and Richard Mather, of Orford, husbandman, of a close in Woolston, for 21 years.* The number of lessees to whom this lease was made leads to a suspicion either that the lease was for some public purpose or for the benefit of the lessor's creditors; and this suspicion is strengthened by a bond of the 29th Sept., 14th Eliz. (1572), by which Mr. Bruche, with Adam Yate as his surety, gave a money bond to Richard Houghton for £8, conditioned to be void on payment of the sum of four pounds at the house of Thomas Allen, of Warrington.‡ On the 3rd Aug., 15 Eliz. (1573), Mr. Bruche leased to John Clerke, of Warrington, husbandman, a close there, called the *Four Cruelles* in the *Calvary* meadow, and the Wheat field, for 21 years, at a rent of a penny a year and fifty shillings in hand.§ The lease of this land with so singular a name, and for so inadequate a consideration, must have been an improvident bargain on the part of the lessor. On the 31st Jan.,

* Bruche deeds. † Ib. ‡ Ib. § Ib.

17 Eliz. (1575), Mr. Bruche, in consideration of £6 6s 8d. leased to Richard Houghton, of Fearnhead, gentleman, two closes of meadow and pasture land, belonging to the demesne of Bruche, for a term of four years, and also a field called the Great Highfield, for three years, yielding for it half the corn grown upon it during that term.† It would be difficult to find a more unusual reservation of rent than this. On the 3rd April, 18 Eliz. (1576), Mr. Bruche leased to Richard Houghton, in consideration of 6s. 8d., a close called the Greater Highfield, for three years.‡ This receiving payment of rent beforehand argues improvidence, and want of money. On the 15th April, 19 Eliz. (1577), Mr. Bruche, in consideration of £130, leased to Thomas Norreys, of Orford, gentleman, a piece of land in Poulton, containing twenty-four acres of land, called the Twyst, for 21 years.* Thus the owner sells 24 acres of land for 21 years for little more than five pounds an acre!

* Bruche deeds.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.



CHAPTER VII.

ON the 7th April, 22 Eliz. (1580), Hamlet Bruche sat as one of the jury on the inquisition taken after Sir Thomas Boteler's death; and on the 1st October, 21 Eliz. (1579), he granted to Richard Houghton, of Fearnhead, yeoman, a lease of two acres of land lying between the Hollay (Howley) acres and the river Mersey, for nine years, in consideration of eight pounds paid to him in hand.* This would make the rent about eight shillings and sixpence an acre; but this taking of a forehand rent is an argument that the lessor was needy. And we have a further proof of this when on 31st October, 26 Eliz. (1584), we find him acknowledging a statute of Acton Burnel for £2,000 before the Mayor and Recorder of Chester, as owing by him to Roger Bruche, for corn, wool, and other merchandise bought of him, *pro bladis lanis et aliis mercandisis ab eo emptis*.† Landed gentlemen at that time were not amenable to some of the more stringent processes of law then in use for enforcing payment of debts; but by the statute of Acton Burnel, the creditor whose debtor in acknowledging a debt condescended to call himself a trader or merchant, gave his creditors the same remedy against him that he could have had against any ordinary trader.‡ It must have been this

* Bruche deeds.

† Ib.

‡ Gibson's Lydiate, 245.

Hamlet who is referred to in the bishop's return of 1590 as a usual comer to church but as not being a communicant. Hamlet Bruche married Jane, daughter of Richard Mascy, Esquire, of Rixton; and it would seem that before 1583 he had either transferred his interest in the Bruche estate to his brother Roger Bruche, or having no issue had made him a sharer in it; for on 17th November, in that year, as we have seen, Roger Bruche gave a bond to Sir Peter Legh for one thousand marks, with a condition that it should be void on his keeping the covenants contained in a pair of indentures of the same date, probably relating to some charge on the Bruche estate which he had bargained to sell to Sir Peter, for he was evidently suffering from a low ebb in the purse.* Sir Peter indeed had most probably agreed to advance him money by instalments, for on 2nd Dec., 27 Eliz. (1584), he received from Sir Peter twenty-five pounds, which the latter had given a bond to pay him on 24th March following, so that he anticipated the payment by more than three months before it was due.† On 11th Aug., 27 Eliz. (1585), he again received a like sum of money which would not have been due until the 28th September following, so that the payment was again anticipated.‡ The next receipt which was given for a like sum due on the 24th March following bears date the 31st Oct., 28 Eliz. (1586), and gives us the additional information that Sir Peter, "his worshipful master," as Roger calls him, was then living at Bradley.§ On 15th April, 28 Eliz. (1586), Roger Bruche received another instalment from Sir Peter Legh which was not really due until 28th September following.|| On the 2nd

* Bruche deeds.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.

§ Ib.

|| Ib.

Nov., 1586, Roger's half brother, Richard Bruche, was called in to witness the will of Edward Boteler, the last survivor of an ancient house.* On Nov. 4th, 29 Eliz., 1587, when Sir Peter made another payment of twenty-five pounds to Roger Bruche, the receipt calls the debtor the worshipful Sir Peter Legh, of Lyme, in Hanley, and acknowledges that he had previously received ten pounds towards an instalment not due until the March following.† Either Sir Peter's exchequer was always at full tide or Roger Bruche's was always at an ebb. On the 20th January, 30 Eliz., 1588, Sir Peter Legh paid Roger Bruche £284 in part of a sum of £300 which would be due at the following Michaelmas.‡ But Sir Peter Legh, who had thus had so many money transactions with Roger Bruche, died on the 6th December, 1590, and was succeeded in his estate by his grandson, Peter Legh, Esquire, and with him on 17th February, 1590, the old money lending was renewed, and Roger Bruche on that day acknowledged himself by a statute staple to owe Mr. Legh a hundred pounds *for goods sold*.§ The statute staple gave the lender more power over the borrower's lands if he were a trader, and so Roger Bruche consents to call himself a dealer in goods.

To this bond there are three seals affixed, one of which is that of the Mayor of Chester, another of the Recorder, and the third has opposite to Roger Bruche's signature his family arms upon it, viz., *Argent* a chevron between three mullets *sable*; but we are not able to say whether the Bruche crest, a demi-bird with wings, displayed *sable*, formed any part of this seal. In the next transaction, however, the

* Annals of the Lords of Warrington, Chet. So., p. 515.

† Bruche deeds.

‡ *Ib.*

§ *Ib.*

borrower and lender change places; and on the 30th July, 36 Elizabeth, 1594, Peter Legh, Esquire, described as being of Lyme Handley, gave Roger Bruche, of Bruche, his bond for a sum of money conditioned to be void on his suffering Alice, Roger's wife, to enjoy for her life such part of the demesne of Bruche as was then in Roger's occupation; and also to receive a rent of £3 6s. 8d. a year out of certain lands lately enclosed, and another rent of £1 4s. issuing out of a tenement in Poulton, and a rent of £1 os. 6d. from a tenement in Fearnhead, and a rent of 13s. 4d. from a tenement in Poulton.* On the 30th October, 36 Eliz., 1594, things had returned to there normal state; for Roger Bruche then received from Peter Legh, Esquire, thirty pounds by three instalments towards payment for some land which Mr. Legh had bought from him. In this receipt Roger expressly calls Mr. Legh his "Master."* But

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

and so after all this borrowing Roger and Hamlet Bruche, who it would seem was still living in the year 1600, contracted to sell their ancient home to Mr. Legh, who had now become Sir Peter Legh, knight; and the old place, which had given the Bruches their name, and which it must have cost them many a pang to part with, passed away from them for ever. What was the exact price which the purchaser paid for it does not appear. If the bond of 17th November, 1583, which Roger Bruche gave to Sir Peter Legh for one thousand marks, equal to £666 13s. 4d., was supposed to be the measure of the value of the estate, the

* Bruche deeds.

† Ib.

price, if compared with its value now, was small and very inadequate. Some small portion of the purchase money, however, must still have remained unpaid; for on the 20th Nov., 44 Eliz., 1601, Sir Peter Legh then gave his bond to pay Roger Bruche £50 on a day named, at the house of John Bulling, in Warrington; and the money having been paid on the 21st December, 45 Elizabeth, 1602, Roger Bruche then executed to him a general release of the money and all actions whatsoever.* The seal of Roger Bruche to this deed bears the Bruche arms as before described. William Byrche, M.A., a Lancashire man and a Fellow of Corpus Coll., Cambridge, who was ejected by Queen Mary's visitors in 1553, became warden of Manchester and probably prebendary of Durham in 1563, and in 1567 was deprived of the latter for Nonconformity. He may have been one of the Bruche family, though he does not appear in the pedigree. Was he a son of Richard, half brother of Hamlet and Roger?

There was another family of Birch, of Birch, near Manchester, whose name had the same origin as the Bruches, but they did not use the same arms, but bore *azure* three *fleur de lis or*, and for a crest a *fleur de lis argent*, entwined by a serpent, arms, which though very different from those of the Bruches, were the same as those of the London and Lincolnshire Birches. In the latter part of 1674 Andrew Birch, a younger son of Thomas Birch, Esquire, of Birch, and Alice, his wife, daughter of Thomas Brooke, Esquire, of Norton, visited France and wrote letters to his father and mother describing what he had seen in his travels.

What we shall have to say next respecting Bruche will show the Leghs in possession of that old place.

* Bruche deeds.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEGHS OF BRUCHE.

SIR PETER LEGH, knight, the purchaser of Bruche, was already owner of the ancient house of Lyme. The owners of a small landed estate who are not prudent and take no pains to increase it, generally find that it melts away and becomes absorbed in the larger estate of some of their richer neighbours, and, after it had remained some three centuries in the hands of its former owners, this happened to Bruche. Sir Peter, having acquired full possession of the estate about 1602, seems to have lost no time in rebuilding Bruche Hall, which its late owners in their improvidence had neglected and allowed to fall into decay. The greater part of the new house which Sir Peter erected has long since perished, but there remains in it at least one bay which was his work, and one room of this, which after a long period of neglect, is now converted into a library and filled with books, leaves us at a loss which to admire most—the original building of the room, or the taste of the present occupant, who having discovered and restored it, has filled it with such rare treasures of literature and art, as the first builder, though a scholar and a lover of books, could never have brought together. It would seem from what has been traced of the

old brickwork that the house built by Sir Peter Legh at Bruche consisted of two gables and a centre; but the library, originally perhaps the upper part of the great hall-place, is all that is now noticeable. It has an open raftered roof, the beams of which have not been sawn or planed, but merely chipped into shape by an axe or an adze, and the room in the appropriateness with which it has been decorated carries back the mind to the date of its erection, and he who opens in it some of its old volumes to read cannot help feeling himself in a reverent frame of mind.

Sir Peter Legh seems to have lived occasionally at Bruche, which was sufficiently near Warrington to enable him to attend its public meetings, take part in the town's affairs, and oversee his property there, which was considerable. He had a large family, and on 28th March, 1622, he joined his three younger sons, Francis, Thomas, and Peter, in making a settlement of the Bruche estate. Sir Peter's life having already appeared at some length in the account of the House of Lyme, it is unnecessary to repeat it here as one of the owners of Bruche. After Sir Peter's death, which happened at Lyme on the 17th February, 1636, the Bruche estate devolved on his three younger sons. Of these Peter Legh, Esquire, the youngest, seems to have entered into the possession of the Hall. On the 5th February, 1641-2, he was elected member of Parliament for the borough of Newton.* He married first Frances Bellot, a lady of a good Cheshire family, who died leaving an only child, Piers Legh, who died at an early age unmarried. Mr. Legh married to his second wife Anne, daughter of Henry Birkenhead, of Backford, who was born in 1604 and died on

* Parl. Hist., IX. 31.

June 11th, 1688, and was buried at Warrington* Mr. Legh, who had inherited from his mother the seeds of consumption, died young. On the 11th December, 1641, he made his will, and appointed his brother, Francis Legh, and Henry Birkenhead his executors; and his death happened soon after, for his burial is recorded on the 18th Dec., 1641, and the executors proved his will at Chester on the 24th March following. By his second wife he had three sons and one daughter, of whom Piers, the eldest, succeeded him at Bruche. On the 12th April, 1642, Francis Legh, Esquire, who, by the settlement made by his father, and the death of his own brother Thomas, seems to have had some interest in Bruche, leased to Henry Bradshawe, of Marple (the father of the president of the High Court of Justice), and George Bowdon, of Disley, yeoman, his one moiety or half-part of Bruche Hall, and of all other the messuages and lands, late the inheritance of Roger Bruche, in Bruche, Warrington, Poulton, Woolston, Fearnhead, Great and Little Sankey, and Penketh. To hold for 40 years upon trust for Piers Legh, gentleman, son and heir of Peter Legh, late of Bruche afore-said, deceased, late brother of the said Francis Legh, and the heirs male of his body, and in default of such issue for Thomas Legh, gentleman (brother of the said Piers), and the heirs male of his body if they should after St. Bartholomew's day, 1656, upon the request of Richard Legh, gentlemen, son and heir of Thomas Legh, deceased, late brother of the said Francis Legh, or of the heirs male of the body of the said Richard Legh, and in default of such issue then of Thomas Legh, gentleman (brother of the said Richard) or of his heirs male, make and do all lawful acts for transferring all the here-

* Parish Regr.

ditaments theretofore, the inheritance of the said Peter Legh, deceased, and then of the said Piers Legh, in Macclesfield forest, unto and to the use of the said Richard Legh and the heir male of his body to enjoy the premises aforesaid.



CHAPTER IX.

ON the death of Peter Legh, Esquire, which took place at Bruche in March, 1642, he was succeeded in that estate by his eldest son, Piers Leigh, Esquire, of Bruche, who was then under age. He must have come of age, however, before June, 1653, when we find him corresponding on the family affairs with other members of the house. And if there was an election for Newton in that year (the record of which is wanting) he was probably one of the members. In 1656 he was one of the persons named in the Act of Parliament then passed for raising an assessment laid on the county of Lancaster. The assessment was for raising £60,000 a month for three months, of which Lancashire was to raise £800 and Cheshire £660 at each time. These proportions are very different from what they would be now. When Richard Cromwell called his first Parliament, in January, 1659, Mr. Legh was one of the members returned for Newton, his colleague being William Brereton, Esquire. If, as is probable, he was present when the Protector opened the Parliament, he heard him say, "theirs was the best army in the world for their patience in not mutinying for their pay." In the same year we read this entry respecting his marriage in the Stockport register:—"Peeres Legh, of Bruch, in the county of Lancaster,

Esquire, and Mrs. Margaret Hyde, daughter of Edward Hyde, of Nothburie, Esquire, were published in the church of Stockport, the 12th, 19th, and 26th days of February, 1659," and the marriage took place almost immediately afterwards. Edward Hyde, the bride's father, is the gentleman to whom Sir George Booth, in 1645, wrote that most characteristic letter which is preserved, and may be read, in the Warrington Museum. While Cromwell was living, the Government of England in the eyes of foreigners stood higher than it had ever done before. He had, however, reason for great anxiety at home. There had been large confiscations, under which the sufferers and their many friends were so discontented that they were ready to support any enterprise that would shake off his yoke. It troubled the Protector, too, to think that even many of his own troops were not to be depended upon, and this led him to select out of them twelve officers on whom he could implicitly rely, and to assign to each of them a certain district of England in which he was to be major-general, and to exercise supreme command over all persons without any appeal except to Cromwell himself. Each of them had full power to commit to prison, fine, or send to the plantations all such persons as they thought fit to suspect, and he had also power within his own district to raise a body of horse and foot who were to be independent of the regular army, and only to obey his orders who had raised them. Thus invested with arbitrary power, these major-generals could hardly fail to abuse it, and by it Cromwell's popularity was still further injured. Charles Worsley, the major-general who was set over Cheshire, and had the charge of Lancashire and Staffordshire also, was the son of Ralph Worsley, Esquire, of Platt, where he was born in 1622. He early entered the service of the Par-

liament, and in 1644, when he was scarcely of age, he had the commission of a captain in their army. Being a good soldier, he became lieutenant-colonel before 1650, and at the age of 29 he had the command of the Protector's own regiment of foot. He mustered his men at Cheet-ham Hill, and then marched with them to Scotland to join Cromwell ; but they arrived too late to share in the victory of Dunbar. He conducted 300 soldiers to the door of the House of Commons, and assisted in the forcible dissolution of the Long Parliament on 20th April, 1653, and with his own hands carried off "that bauble," as Cromwell called the Speaker's mace.* In 1654 he was elected member of Parliament for Manchester. The outcry against these Major Generals became at length so great that Cromwell was obliged first to curtail and afterwards to revoke their powers. Major General Worsley, in whom he had great confidence, having been summoned to London, very probably with a view to some consultation on this measure, wrote to Secretary Thurloe this letter, which will excite the reader's compassion :—"Right Honble Sir,—Yours bearing date the 10th instant I received yesternight, but as to his Highness' letter, I have herd nothinge off it as yet but by yours. I have been now nere upon one mounth rideinge abroad in three countyes and Chester cittie, and had appointed a meetinge to-morrow at Bury. And indeede, Sir, I am not well. My intent was to have taken a little rest at my cominge home and some physicke. But seeinge I have received this command I intend (if the Lord will) to be with you with all speed ; but if not att the very day it shal be because I am not able ; but I shall take post and

* *Memorials of Manchester Streets*, 362.

observe your commands as neere as possible. That's all, from your honour's faithful servant, CHAS. WORSLEY.—Warrington, the 13th May, 1656." The sequel is soon told. He hastened to London, where, on the 12th June, 1656, one day less than a month after his letter, he breathed his last in St. James's Palace, at the early age of 35, and was buried with much pomp in Westminster Abbey, where his remains, though they escaped being disturbed when the other regicides were exhumed, were discovered not very long ago and identified.* He was a man so much looked up to by his party, that some of them even thought he would be the fittest man to succeed the Protector in his office if he should outlive Cromwell. But this opinion was not universal, for upon his grave some anonymous hand wrote these words,

Where never Worse lay.

While Cromwell lived the dread of his power and his transcendant abilities kept both the royalists and the other discontented parties in check, but after his death, on 3rd September, 1658, they took courage, and no sooner, in the following year, had his son and successor laid down his sceptre than they began to bestir themselves as men newly awakened.

They rallied in parades of woods,
And unfrequented solitudes.

Two short months had scarcely passed before Sir George Booth, of Dunham, lord of the manor of Warrington, anxious with the royalists to see the King have his own again, went to Manchester and took part in a conference of the Cavaliers and Presbyterians, when it was decided that

* Stanley's Westminster Abbey.

there should be a general rising on the first of August* and a call, as we shall see, was made upon Mr. Piers Legh, of Bruche, to join them.

The meeting at Manchester being ended, it was decided to send over Col. Roger Whitley, of Peel Hall, Tarvin, a faithful servant of the King's late father, to Calais or to Brussels to see the King and communicate the resolutions of the royalist party. Colonel Whitley returned on the 29th July, bringing with him his Majesty's gracious acknowledgments and a commission under the royal signet and sign manual appointing Sir George Booth commander-in-chief of all the forces to be raised for his Majesty in Cheshire, Lancashire, and North Wales. Under this authority a commission signed by Sir George Booth and others was sent to Piers Legh, Esquire, of Bruche, appointing him to be Colonel of a regiment of horse. It being understood that besides Piers Legh, Colonel Gilbert Ireland, of Bewsey, Colonel Holland, of Heaton, Colonel Henry Brooke, of Norton, Colonel Peter Brooke, of Mere, the Earl of Derby, Lord Kilmorey, Major-General Egerton, Sir Thomas Middleton, Major-General Venables, (the officer who with Penn had taken Jamaica), and many others both of the clergy and laity, who approved of the intended array, were willing to join in it. Sir George Booth having collected his tenants and supporters now seized on Chester on the 1st of August, and Colonel John Booth, an experienced soldier and Sir George's uncle, was appointed to be its governor, who, however, in his attempt to take the castle, was unsuccessful. Sir George then secured Manchester and Warrington, after which there came, as it appeared, a short

* Newcome's Diary Chet. So. pref. xxv.

check to his further progress ; for on Saturday, 6th August, Mr. Newcome says, " We had an alarm which was terrible, and the next day when we were at sacrament, the Earl of Derby came in with a troop of horse, who shot off their pistols and did somewhat disturb us and sufficiently affect us with the voice of the trumpet and the noise of war." " At night," he continues, " after sermon, we were with Sir George Booth, who told us with much sorrow how falsely he was deserted. Five hundred lords and gentlemen of the best in England were engaged, and were all either prevented or had failed in their trust, and none were up but Sir Thomas Middleton. We advised him to endeavour a mediation between Lambert and them. Wearied with the unsettled state of society, upwards of 100 volunteers marched through Warrington to rally round the standard of revolt."* Col. Piers Legh was not one of those who broke their promise to Sir George Booth, for he and his brother Thomas Legh marched to the appointed rendezvous at Rowton Heath, which was a place of evil omen, for it was there that the royalists had been defeated and the gallant Earl of Lichfield slain in the early part of the civil war ; and it was of this battle that the royalist chronicler in recording it remarks that the enemy lost in it neither a nobleman nor a gentleman because, as he says, they had none to lose. The forces who on the present occasion were at the rendezvous mustered about 3,000 men, a very small army indeed with which to attempt to overthrow a government which had been twenty years installed in power. On the 9th August Sir George Booth forwarded to London " An address from the knights and gentlemen of Cheshire to the

* Newcome's Autobiography, Chet. So., I. 10.

city and citizens of London and all other the freemen of England." In this address he brought forward the deplorable condition of the country, where oppression, injustice, and tyranny reigned; division, discord, and dissimulation were fermented and fostered; trade and industry were discouraged, the land was rent into parties and factions, and the common bond of unity was cancelled, the fundamental laws were supplanted, high courts of justice were introduced, the blood of war was shed in times of peace, arbitrary and illegal imprisonments, patents monopolies, excise, and other payments were brought upon the country, contrary to "Magna Charta" and the "Petition of Right," no form or phase of the English constitution or government were remaining; the name and authority of the people in Parliament were usurped and abused, and the stamp and authority thereof were put upon strange and prodigious actions, vexing and oppressing the people with daily changes, and alterations in the form of government as the interest of a few ambitious grandees altered and changed, and all this under the name of Commonwealth. "From the men who thus handle the stern at Westminster." The address proceeds:—"There is no just expectation of any just settlement of peace or freedom from oppression;" and the address concludes by challenging as of English right the speedy election of "a new free parliament the "Englishman's birth-right, which," says the address, "we are resolved either to put the people in possession of, or to perish with swords in our hands." This spirited declaration, it should be observed, was directed against those who called themselves the Parliament, and had in the opinion of a large part of the country usurped the Government, and it contained no reference to the King's interests. Happening where it was least ex-

pected, the rising of Sir George Booth and his party gave the Parliament good cause for alarm, more especially because they distrusted their own troops and had little confidence in their officers. As, however, something was evidently to be done without delay, they commissioned Colonel Lambert, who it was thought was fittest for the business, to march with all speed into Cheshire at the head of three regiments of cavalry, a regiment of dragoons, and three regiments of foot, a force amounting altogether to upwards of 6,000 men. Dispensing with all unnecessary baggage, Lambert leaving London on 6 August reached Nantwich on the 15th, where his officers were quartered at the house of Roger Wilbraham, Esquire, of Townend. On the 18th they marched away to meet the enemy. Sir George Booth, who was no soldier, hearing of Lambert's advance, called his chief officers to a council, when, seeing that Chester Castle had not been taken, but still held out for the Parliament under Colonel Croxton, and that the dismantled city walls were no longer defensible, it was determined that the little insurgent army of 4,000 men, of whom 1,700 consisted of mounted Cheshire gentlemen, should march into the centre of the county.

Dispirited by the many disappointments and broken promises they had encountered, the army marched to Northwich, where after placing detachments to guard the bridges, both there and at Winnington, they threw up entrenchments, which, the river there not being fordable, were important precautions. The bridge at Winnington, like many old bridges being very narrow, with high parapet walls at each side, Sir George at its northern end flanked it by a strong ditch, and a high wall, about which there was no passing, except by a narrow path which was difficult to pass on foot, and was still more difficult for horses.

Meanwhile, Lambert having left Nantwich, on the 18th arrived at Weaverham, and at dusk the same evening the two armies were in sight of each other, which must have caused Sir George Booth to pass the ensuing night in much anxiety, for his little force was inferior in numbers, and still more inferior in discipline to his opponent's well-appointed troops, which had been exercised in many a former field of fight, and which were lacking in nothing except, perhaps, some scarcity in their commissariat. On the following morning, the 19th, Sir George Booth's followers, who, in whatever else they might differ, were united in sharing the national infirmity, which, when it sees an enemy, cannot help feeling a desire to fight him. With this feeling strong upon them, their commander commenced the attack by sending out a detachment of skirmishers, who were to engage Lambert's vanguard, with whom they came in contact amongst the enclosures near Hartford where their being hindered from acting, gave Sir George's troops an advantage by enabling them to retire from hedge to hedge across the bridge at Winnington, without suffering any other loss, as Lambert himself said, than reputation. Here for a while they made a stand, until three destructive volleys from the enemy breaking up their ranks compelled them to retire, when Lambert who saw that the narrow bridge with its high parapets and the ditch and wall beyond was defended only by a very small body of horse, advanced with his whole force. Morgan, the captain, who with his little band had charge of this Thermopylæ, made such a gallant resistance to the attacking party as to extort by his valour and conduct the admiration of Lambert, but against so overwhelming a force his resistance proved in vain, and at length every man, even to their brave commander, having

been cut down, Lambert crossed the bridge over their dead bodies. The resistance at the bridge, however, had continued long enough to enable Sir George Booth's infantry to close their ranks and to retire in good order, following their colours up the hill for a quarter of a mile, when they halted, re-formed, and again offered battle. But here Lambert's disciplined forces again proved their superiority; and the renewed fight, which from the first was not doubtful, ended in a total rout, in which, owing to the numerous fences and enclosures, the infantry escaped with comparatively little loss, and the cavalry, dividing into two parties, took opposite roads, one taking that to Frodsham and the other that to Warrington. The former division, consisting of six or seven hundred men, the greater part of whom were gentlemen and but amateur warriors, passed on to Chester, and from thence into North Wales. The other body was stopped and made prisoners at Warrington, by four companies of foot and a troop of horse, whom Lambert, who had been at Warrington before and knew the country well, had sent there for that purpose. Lambert himself pushed on to Chester, and entered the city without opposition. The list of casualties on Sir George Booth's side did not include more than forty or fifty killed, but what was the extent of the loss sustained by the other side, though it was probably much greater, is not exactly known. The large mound in Hartford, which is shown on the Ordnance maps, and there marked as Gibbet Hill, is supposed to be the place where the dead were buried after the battle. The scene of this fight by an odd mistake is placed both by Ludlow, one of Cromwell's generals, and by Oldmixon, the historian, at Warrington, and not at Winnington. In the preface to the history of Cheshire there is a list given of the

84 officers and gentlemen who were made prisoners in the battle and sent to Chester Castle, and amongst them we find the name of Colonel Piers Legh. Many of the others were Cheshire men of good family ; but two of their number, the Vicar of Runcorn and the Vicar of St. Bride's, Chester, we must suppose were not in the fight as combatants, but as chaplains to the forces. Their presence, however, shows that they shared Sir George Booth's views. Thomas Legh, of Bruche, the younger brother of Piers, was probably one of those brave men who fell in defending the bridge and whose bodies formed the rampart over which Lambert crossed to take it. His body, however, was brought home to Warrington, and there buried in the churchyard on the 22nd August, 1659, as the parish register informs us. Sir George himself escaped from the battle, and being afterwards taken at Newport Pagnell was sent to the Tower, where as he needed comfort the King wrote him letters of sympathy, and promised such support as he could give. But he did not languish long in prison, for on the 21st February following on the Long Parliament being restored, Sir George, who was one of its old members, was set at liberty and took his seat in the House. Either then or a little later Piers Legh, who was also one of the old members, was set at liberty and re-entered the House. On the 19th April, 1660, he had a commission from Parliament, signed amongst others by the celebrated George Monk, appointing him to be captain of a troop of horse in a militia regiment raised or about to be raised in Lancashire, and to be commanded by Sir Richard Hoghton, baronet.

CHAPTER X.

THE commission which Piers Legh received from Monk to be captain in a militia regiment after he had held a colonel's commission under Sir George Booth, although it was a step downward in rank, was a safer position to occupy, and as affairs stood was therefore the more welcome. Not long before the fight at Winnington he had married, as we have seen, Margaret, the daughter of Edward Hyde, of Norbury. The royalists were now rejoicing in the restoration of Charles II., but the home of Colonel or Captain Piers Legh, who belonged to that party, was shortly afterwards saddened by the death of his wife, whom he had so lately married, and her burial is thus recorded in the register of the same church where she had been married :—"Margaret, the wyfe of Mr. Piers Legh, of Bruch, in the countie of Lancaster, was buried 17th Dec., 1661." In 1662, Colonel Legh presented a petition to the Crown to appoint him prothonotary, *custos brevium* and clerk of assize for the counties of Chester and Flint, in the room of Henry Birkenhead, his late grandfather, whose family it was alleged had held that office for many generations, and either then or on another occasion a memorial signed by the Earl of Derby, Sir George Booth, and many others, was addressed to "His Most Excellent Majesty,"

setting forth the loyalty and valour he had shown as became a loyal subject with great hazard of his life, and when his only brother was slain beside him. Whether he obtained the office he sought, and which was one that required little or no training for its proper discharge, and to which he seems to have had some hereditary claim, we do not know; but on 20th October, 1663, Charles Earl of Derby, lord-lieutenant of Lancashire and Cheshire, calling him "Captain Lieutenant Piers Legh," appointed him to the command of a company of foot in the militia of Lancashire. Captain lieutenant is an odd term which one hardly understands, though it seems to be again a step downwards. In Jan., 1665, when war was to be prosecuted against the Dutch, and Parliament had granted a large supply for it, he was appointed one of the commissioners for raising the money. About this time he married for his second wife Abigail, the daughter of John Chetwode, Esquire. In the year 1672, when he was little more than fifty, he died, leaving his wife Abigail surviving; and on the 16th July following his will was proved at Chester. There is a good portrait of him at Lyme, which is marked, "Piers Legh, of Bruche, grandson of Sir Peter Legh." By his first wife he had a son, called like himself Piers Legh, who succeeded him, and by his second wife, who survived him, and took an interest under his will, and was living in 1693, he had a son and a daughter. The son's death is thus registered in the Warrington parish register:—"May, 1669, buried an infant son to Piers Legh, Esq., of Bruche." Frances, the daughter, who survived her father, we shall have occasion to mention hereafter. Piers Legh, who was a minor when he succeeded to the Bruche estate, on the death of his father, in 1672, was sent in 1680 to complete his education at Mag-

Magdalen College, Cambridge, where he had Mr. Peak for his tutor. In 1685 he was elected M.P. for Newton, and he proved himself so strenuous in supporting James II., that we might almost think he had caught the influence of that spirit of divine right and passive obedience which the monarch sought by forcible means to enforce upon the sister College of Magdalen, at Oxford. When the King was crowned he went to London to attend the coronation, and he wrote an account of it in a letter to his friends describing the ceremony at great length, and in most laudatory terms and full of regrets that none of the Lyme family had been there to witness it. He did not, however, live long enough to see the joy of the new King's succession turned into mourning for his exile, for in 1686 he was himself carried to the grave, and his will, dated 20th December, 1684, was proved at Chester on 28th September, 1686. He died unmarried, and the Bruche estate then passed, probably in consequence of some settlement, to his half sister, Frances.



CHAPTER XI.

FRANCES LEGH, who succeeded her brother, was born on June 9th, 1670, and in March, 1686-7, she married her kinsman, Peter Legh, Esq., the son of Richard Legh, Esq., of Lyme, who was born 22nd August, 1669. Of Mr. Legh's two committals on a charge of high treason, a full account having been given in the history of the Lyme family, we need not repeat it here. Mrs. Legh made her will on 3rd August, 1714, and she made a codicil to it on 4th February, 1725. By these she gave various charitable legacies to the poor and others, and left £100 to erect a monument in the chancel of Warrington Church to her father, brother, and relatives buried there; and on the 17th February, 1727-8, she died and was buried at Winwick. The monument which according to her directions was erected in the chancel after her death and which is still there bears this inscription:—
“ Frances, daughter of Peers Legh, of Bruch, esq., and Abigail, his wife, ordered this monument to be erected in memory of her father and mother, and of Peers Legh, her half brother by a former wife. She was born June the 9th, 1670, and died February the 17th, 1727. She married Peter Legh of Lyme, esquire, and was interred in the burial place of that family in Winwick Church. The sums given by this

lady to pious and charitable uses were as follows : To the school of Dysley, in the county of Chester, £100. To the charity school behind Trinity Chapel, in this town, £100. To the poor of Warrington, £100. To the poor of Poulton and Fearnhead £50. To the poor of Newton, £50 ; also for two sermons to be preached annually at the Parish Church of Warrington and Trinity Chapel, 20s. each."

Mr. and Mrs. Legh had an only son, Piers Legh, who attained to man's estate, and died unmarried in June, 1725. His burial, which took place at Warrington, on the 14th June, is thus recorded in the register:—"Piers Legh, of Bruche, esquire." After Mrs. Legh's death, which perhaps was hastened by concern for the loss of her son, the estate passed to her aunt Frances Legh, who had married William Bankes. Mr. Legh survived his wife and died in 1744.

Of William Bankes, who married Frances Legh, the last survivor of her family at Bruche, and to whom and his family by this marriage the estate passed, a short account must be given. The Bankes family, who were originally settled in Craven, seem to have sent an offshoot from Yorkshire into Lancashire in the reign of Henry VIII. William Bankes, who was seated at Wigan about the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, was an ancestor of Sir Joseph Bankes, the well-known naturalist, who, though he did good service to science in the reign of George III., did not escape the sarcastic pen of Peter Pindar, who not only made him extensively known, but made himself and others merry with his eccentricities. James Bankes, a second son of this William, in 16 James I., 1618, was found to be the owner of Winstanley, near Wigan, where his descendants took root, and have been settled ever since. James must have been wealthy, for on 1st October, 2 James I., 1604, he advanced to Thomas Southworth and his son John

a considerable sum on mortgage of their Houghton estate; and on the 1st January, 8 James I., 1610, they released to him that estate, calling it the "Manor of Houghton," with the mansion of Peel House, or Peel Hall there. Before the 10th October, 1623, however, he was dead; and on 20th September in the following year, William Bankes, his son and successor, married Sarah, the daughter of Walter Jones, Esq. On 14 January, 8 Car. I., 1633, he presented a curious petition to be freed from serving the office of constable for Peel House or any of his lands in Houghton; and the petition having been favourably considered by Sir George Vernon, the justice of assize at Lancaster, was granted. What reason there might be for this exemption does not appear; but the exemption, it would seem, was considered of some value at that time, for King James used to say that that was the happiest state in England which placed a man above being a constable and below being a justice of the peace. On 17th Oct., 1656, by an indenture made between the same William Bankes, calling himself Wm. Bankes the elder, of Winstanley, esquire, and Sarah, his wife, of the first part; William Bankes, the younger, gentleman, son of the said William Bankes, the elder, of the second part; Anne Legh, of Bruche, widow, of the third part; and Richard Legh, esquire, of Lyme, Roger Bradshaigh, esquire, of Haigh, Henry Birkenhead, esquire, of Backford, Piers Legh, esquire, of Bruche, Arthur Jones, esquire, of Chastleton, in the county of Oxford, and John Blackburne, clerk, of Blackley Hurst, of the fourth part; it was witnessed that in consideration of a marriage to be thereafter solemnized between the said William Bankes, the younger, and the said Frances Legh, and to secure her a competent jointure, the manor or lordship of Houghton, in Winwick, with the man-

sion of Peel House, and lands in Middleton, Croft, Arbury, Orford, Billinge, Pemberton, Rainford, and Winstanley, were limited in strict settlement after the death of the said William Bankes, the elder, upon the said William Bankes, the younger, with proper provisions of jointure for his wife. On the 23rd October, 1656, only a few days after the foregoing indenture, the marriage of the contracting parties is thus entered in our Warrington register, "1656, Oct., W. Mr. Wm. Bankes to Mrs. Frances Legh of Bruche." William Bankes, the younger, died in or about 1668, leaving his father surviving, who, it seems, lived very long "withering out" the young widow's "revenue." It is doubtful, indeed, whether she lived to derive any benefit either from the settlement of the Houghton property, or from the Bruche estate. William Bankes the elder, as we shall see, attained a great age. In 1660, when there was an election for Liverpool, the Honourable William Stanley, then of the juvenile age of 19 years, was returned as one of the members for that borough, having Sir Gilbert Ireland, knight, for his colleague. On Tuesday, the 25th Oct., 1670, while he was still a member, Mr. Stanley died, which occasioned a new election, and on 6th May, 1675, when there was again an election in the place of Sir Gilbert Ireland, William Bankes, Esq. (the elder), of Winstanley, was elected in his place, being then of the mature age of 91 years, just reversing the figures of the age at which Mr. Stanley was elected; but the next year Mr. Bankes died, and Frances, his son's widow, if then living, succeeded to the jointure secured to her by the settlement. If she outlived her niece Frances, the wife of Peter Legh, who died in 1725, she then entered into the possession of Bruche, but if she did not live so long it passed to her son, William Bankes, Esq., of Winstanley, who married

Lettice, the daughter of Richard Legh, Esq., and on his death, about the year 1694, it passed to Thomas Bankes, Esq., of Winstanley, who married Ann, the daughter of Thomas Cholmondeley, Esq. About 1732 Thomas Bankes, Esq., was succeeded by Robert Bankes, Esq., and he in 1749 was succeeded by William Bankes, Esq., of Winstanley, who married Elizabeth Meredith, and in 1778 he was succeeded by another William Bankes, Esq., of Winstanley, by whose devisees both it and the Houghton estate were sold at the beginning of the present century.



CHAPTER XII.

THE manufacture of sail cloth was once so great a trade at Warrington that it is said to have supplied half the canvas used in the British navy at the time of the American War of Independence. This cloth continued to be made at Warrington, and to make the fortunes of the manufacturers there down to the end of the last century, but, after that time, it began to languish, and at the end of the first quarter of the present century Ichabod was written on it, and it gave signs of taking its departure. Mr. Jonathan Jackson, who had been engaged in the trade, and had largely profited by it, when Bruche Hall was sold, invested the money he had acquired in the purchase of that property, and retired to live at the hall. The soap manufacture which the Watts family had already begun, and which has since become so successful a branch of business at Warrington was then taking root there, but the infancy both of man and trade is attended with many dangers. The Warrington manufacturers of soap did not at first choose the site of their place of business wisely, or conduct it in the best manner, and people complained loudly of the annoyance caused by its smoke and smells, and to abate the nuisance they had recourse to the law, by which, after some angry proceedings, which both lasted long and were costly,

the works were either put down, or the owners were compelled to adopt less offensive means of carrying them on. One of these manufacturers, Mr. Robert Hatton, who had been thus sued at law, and was compelled by it to change the scene of his operations, either leased or bought from Mr. Jonathan Jackson a piece of land part of his newly-purchased Bruche estate, and upon it he erected soap works which were finished at the end of 1820. Not having sufficient capital to carry on the works alone, Mr. Jackson, of Bruche, was induced to join him as his moneyed partner. In March, 1821, Messrs. Jackson and Hatton (the latter of whom was to be the business partner) commenced their manufacture of soap at the new premises. The business which soon succeeded, and appeared to be very thriving. The firm, who were large purchasers of kelp, made a proportionate quantity of soap, the quality of which was not complained of, and they sold it at moderate prices, which was still less likely to be complained of. For about three years the business went on prosperously; but prosperity has its dangers, as adversity has its trials, and soap-making at Paddington (so the works were called) had its trials to encounter. There were other persons their rivals in the trade, who lost some of their customers through the firm at Paddington offering and selling soap of the same quality at a less price than it was said the others could make it. How this could be it was not easy to see; but Argus left some of his hundred eyes behind him to be divided between those who are rivals in trade; and there is ever a chance that a business secret will be seen at last through some chink which has not been closed. Mr. Crosfield, a brother soap maker,

was the person who first communicated his suspicions to the Excise that something was wrong. At that time a high rate of duty was paid to the Government on soap, and the amounts paid from time to time by Messrs. Jackson and Hatton, though they were large, were known also to the other manufacturers, who could easily compare them with their own. It was not so easy, however, to compare the purchases they made of the kelp and other materials for their manufacture, since these were necessarily made from different persons and at various times and places, and the books of the sellers were, as it were, a sealed page to strangers. The Excise, however, had a watchful eye over the Paddington works, which, though they were regularly surveyed and visited by a trusty officer who reported "all right," were not even by this to be put off their guard. Some one made a statement to the Government that the make of soap and the price at which the Paddington makers sold it were irreconcilable if all the dues were fairly paid. The necessity of increased vigilance and strictness was impressed upon their officers by the Excise, and some of the officers were changed, but still nothing was discovered. But deceit and fraud will not last or be hid for ever. Once, when a new officer of Excise, who was on duty, purposely made a visit of surprise, and contrived to enter the soapery unexpectedly, he saw a trap door in the office floor suddenly let down, upon which he at once rushed forward and insisted on its being opened that he might see the place where it led to. On descending through the trap door he found a large vaulted chamber, where contraband soap had evidently been recently made, though

no entry of such room had ever been made in the Excise books. Having his eyes about him, notwithstanding his surprise, he read on the roof of the chamber an inscription made in candle smoke stating that the room had been first used in March, 1821, on a day which was also named. It required no further stimulus to put the law upon the traces of the offenders, and Messrs. Jackson and Hatton were at once proceeded against in one or more actions at the suit of the Crown, and the large sum of £6,340 was recovered against them, being double the amount of the duties incurred on the manufacture of soap in the pans of the non-entered room since March, 1821, and to which the law subjected the offenders for their concealment. The recovery of so large a sum by the Crown alarmed Messrs. Jackson and Hatton's trade creditors, and they shortly afterwards issued a fiat in bankruptcy against them, upon which they were declared bankrupts and all their estates were sold. On the 12th of July, 1824, the soapery was sold by auction, and on the 10th of December following the Bruche estate being put up to public sale, fell under the hammer, *me presente*, at the sum of £19,200, and Mr. Jackson's ownership of Bruche came abruptly to an end.



CONCLUSION.

It has been shewn in the foregoing account that since our first notice of it, Bruche has had a series of four successive owners, (1) The Bruches, (2) The Leghs, (3) 'The Bankes', and (4) Mr. Jackson. The Bruches, *its first* owners, held it for more than three centuries, and when they left the scene, printing had been discovered only about a century and a half; printed books were scarce and dear, and the arts had not been long returned to Western Europe after their long exile. The Bruches, therefore, could never have enriched their house as it has been enriched by the taste of Mr. Rigby, its present occupant. The tenure of Mr. Jackson, *the last* of the four owners, appears in strong contrast with *the first*; for while their's lasted for centuries, his was measured by less than a score of years. But there was a still greater contrast between the way in which the two owners lost the estate. The Bruches were careless stewards of their own, and negligently let their debts increase until their estate was swallowed up. Their negligence was a fault, but Mr. Jackson's course was a crime, for in his haste to be rich he fell into the snare against which holy writ has a solemn warning, and chose too literally the Satirist's rule:—

* * * * rem
Si possis recte; si non quocunque modo rem.

Get wealth, get wealth, if possible with grace,
If not by any means get wealth and place.

And this rule, as might have been foreseen, proving dangerous, he paid the forfeit of his estate. The late Mr. Parr, the purchaser of Bruche at the public sale, was a magistrate both of Cheshire and Lancashire, and was the respected head of the Old Bank, at Warrington, which is now nearly a century old. Since his acquisition of Bruche more than half a century has passed by; and the estate, with his other large estates, has passed into settlement; and as the Bruches held their estate for centuries, so in its new line may it continue as long.

INTER ÆDES PARRIANAS.









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